

Relapse Prevention: Planning for success

You may have expected all of your problems to go away when you quit smoking, but they haven't, have they. Quitting is about building a new life, one without cigarettes and major change takes time. It also involves mixed feelings. One moment you are excited about the possibilities and the next you can feel sad leaving old friends and habits behind. You may be doubting your commitment to this change that you know in your heart is right for you.

Relapse prevention can help; by thinking ahead and working out ways to handle the pressures that might lead you back to tobacco use, allowing you to approach your new life with a greater sense of confidence.

Success means that you are finding new ways of taking care of yourself, new ways of acting with friends, with family, and at school.

What is Relapse?

Relapse happens when you start slipping back into those old behaviour patterns. A relapse can begin long before you take that cigarette. Things that can lead to relapse:

- Feeling overconfident, that you have quitting under control and taking a chance by just having one.
- Not working out stresses and the problems at college, at home and at work. (see the smoking and stress folder on this site)
- Not dealing with stresses, don't allow situations to build to a crisis or you may fall back into tobacco use.
- financial stresses and problems, you need to know that you can speak to an advisor at the Student Funding and Awards room 1101 and that all services are free.
- your health is important, don't ignore what your body is trying to tell you, see a nurse at the Health, Safety and Wellness Centre room 901 or go to one of the Dr. Clinics held on Thursdays 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., call 403.342.3427 for an appointment.
- Not handling negative feelings such as boredom, loneliness or anger.
- Giving into cravings or urges to use tobacco
- When under stress you don't see any other way to cope other than to smoke or use tobacco.
- Not developing strategies or using the strategies that you have developed that can help when a difficult situation arises.
- Thinking that you can just quit cold turkey, this can work but is not the best method of quitting.
- Not planning for times when you will be tempted.

See **Surviving Those Cravings and 20 Steps to Quitting** on this site.

1. Handle day-to-day feelings and problems as they happen. This will prevent pressure and stress from building up.
2. Keep your life in balance Give yourself rewards that give you pleasure— a walk, time with a hobby, enjoy a good book. Make time to take time. Plan breaks into your day, but fill that free time with activities. Avoid caffeine or foods high in sugar as they can make you feel tense. Take a break from school work and go outside to a non-smoking area and take some deep breaths.
3. Gain support and trust. Tell someone about your quit attempt and seek their support. (Use the support contract in your "Kit to Quit")
4. Identify a plan to use in high risk situations. You will find yourself in situations where you are more likely to smoke. Have at least three strategies to deal with them, so if one doesn't work you have a back up or two. Practice what you will say or do, so you won't worry about what to do under pressure.